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In the claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for use by a wireless device in a wireless communications environment, the method comprising the steps of:

associating the wireless device with a current access point;

ascertaining, by the wireless device, whether the wireless device should attempt to associate with another access point, the ascertaining based at least in-part on signal strengths of transmissions from the current and alternative access points; and

requesting association with the ~~another~~ alternative access point if it is ascertained that the wireless device should attempt to associate with said alternative access point.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:
automatically collecting, by the wireless device, information about other access points.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the step of ascertaining ascertains that the wireless device should attempt to associate with the alternative ~~another~~ access point if the alternative access point is closer than the current access point.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the step of ascertaining ascertains that the alternative access point is closer than the current access point by:

calculating a first biased distance between the wireless device and the current access point based on "x" samples;

calculating a second biased distance between the wireless device and the alternative access point ~~operating on said another channel~~ based on "y" samples where "y" is less than "x"; and

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ascertaining that the access point ~~operating on said another channel~~ is closer than the current access point if the second biased distance is less than the first biased distance.

5. (original) The method of claim 3 wherein the step of requesting association requests association by sending a message to the access point.